

Saskatchewan HISTORY

★ Adventures of a
Surveyor

BY

W. T. THOMPSON

★ Pioneering on the
Soo Line

BY

SHIRLEY I. PAUSTIAN



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Adventures of a Surveyor in the Canadian Northwest, 1880-1883

INTRODUCTION

IN the story of Western Canadian settlement after 1870 the work of the land surveyors has not yet been given its proper share of recognition. The farmer, the trader, the lumberman, the miner, the missionary, the rancher, the Mountie, individually and collectively have had their deeds celebrated in prose and verse; but of the debt they all owed to the surveyor so little has been written that the names and achievements of these men of the compass and theodolite are almost unknown save to members of the profession. Yet the land surveyor was the first white man to see many parts of the prairies and forests of the North-West; it was his descriptions of soil and topography which guided the farmer and rancher; it was his careful measurements which fixed the bounds of Indian reservations, the routes of railways and highways, and above all which produced that magnificently accurate gridwork of townships and sections which has made the land survey system of Western Canada one of the world's outstanding examples of practical scientific achievement.

The minor place which the land surveyor has hitherto occupied in the annals of prairie settlement and development is not so surprising when we remember that of all the pioneers he was naturally the least given to celebrating his own achievements. He was a highly trained scientist, learned in mathematics and astronomy, disciplined to conciseness and brevity of expression, made humble and thoughtful by the vast untrodden wilderness of grass and forest. Such men are not boasters and tellers of tall tales, and consequently have been "poor material" for those purveyors of folklore who have so often succeeded in having us accept their romanticizing as history. And, preoccupied with their profession, both from inclination and economic necessity (for they are not a wealthy group) the surveyors have had little leisure to tell their own story.

The foregoing remarks find abundant illustration in the career of one who in the judgment of fellow members of his profession deserved the title of dean of Western Canadian surveyors.¹ William Thomas Thompson had by any standard one of the most remarkable careers in the whole history of surveying. He began his career as an articled surveyor in 1872 at the age of 19; he died on a survey trip in 1938 at the age of 84. In the intervening years he secured two degrees in applied science from McGill University, was commissioned Dominion Land Surveyor and Dominion Topographical Surveyor, obtained commissions in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, was made a member of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers, a life member of the Engineering Institute of Canada and was at one time president of the Saskatchewan Land Surveyors Association.

¹ The biographical information in this Introduction has been secured from a sketch of W. T. Thompson's career prepared by Mr. E. T. Wilkie and published in the Annual Report of the Ontario Land Surveyors' Association for 1939, and also from the papers of the late Mr. Edgar Brown of Winnipeg, microfilm copies of which are in the Archives of Saskatchewan.

To these professional distinctions must be added an even more impressive record of field work and administrative duties. Until 1880 he practiced in various parts of his native Ontario, finding time to undertake an exploratory expedition by canoe through the northern part of that province to James Bay. In 1880 he joined the Dominion Topographical Survey and his work during the four seasons 1880-1883 which took him from Manitoba to British Columbia is described in the following pages. From this time on his lot was cast in Western Canada and in 1884 he settled at Qu'Appelle. In the following years he was in private practice, conducting road surveys for the Territorial Government, and subdivision surveys for the Dominion Government, as well as railway right of way and townsite surveys. In 1896 Mr. Thompson was appointed District Surveyor and Engineer for the Territorial Department of Public Works, a position which he continued to hold after the organization of the Province of Saskatchewan and until 1922. His district was at the start a vast area extending from the international boundary to the northern limit of settlement and from the Manitoba boundary to range 16 west of the 2nd meridian. "During the period from 1886 to 1922," he once wrote, "practically all the main crossings of the Qu'Appelle valley as well as the main roads and road diversions in the region extending from the Manitoba boundary westward to Regina were surveyed by me and construction in many cases carried out under my direction."²

Mr. Thompson's retirement from the government service in 1922 did not mean the end of his professional career and despite his sixty-nine years, he now sought new avenues of service and achievement. He possessed unusual reserves of physical vigor coupled with a capacity for enduring hardship developed by years of activity in the wilderness. "Even in his later years," wrote Mr. Edgar Brown, one of his articulated students, "young robust men were often hard pressed to keep up with him where physical endurance was required on the portage and in the bush."³ Mr. Thompson had become interested in the "mineral belt" of northern Manitoba and decided to settle at Cranberry Portage, then a pioneer area some one hundred and fifty miles by water from the nearest railway at The Pas. In this area he surveyed mineral claims, held the post of police magistrate and was for a number of years president of the Cranberry Portage Board of Trade. He also found time to advocate the merits of the Hudson Bay Route—one of his lifelong interests.

It was typical of an unflagging interest in his profession that death should come to W. T. Thompson while engaged on a mineral claims survey at Cold Lake near Sherridon in July, 1938. Of the many who could pay tribute to his personality the remarks of Mr. Brown are representative:

Of a somewhat retiring disposition, Mr. Thompson never sought public acclaim but as a public spirited citizen his example was an influence for good in the communities in which he lived. Always outspoken in condemnation of dishonesty in public and private life, he

² W. T. Thompson to W. B. Young, September 12, 1931, in Edgar Brown Papers, Archives of Saskatchewan.

³ Edgar Brown Papers: biographical sketch of W. T. Thompson prepared by Mr. Brown.

was noted wherever he went for his tolerance and fair dealing, and his way of life was an exemplification of the Golden Rule.⁴

Mr. Thompson had begun the preparation of a volume of reminiscences, but only the first chapter, covering the years 1880-1883, was completed at the time of his death. This manuscript is published in the following pages with the kind permission of his son, Mr. George F. Thompson of Flin Flon, Manitoba. Mr. A. I. Bereskin, Controller of Surveys, Department of Natural Resources, Regina, has provided footnote explanations of a number of surveying terms which may not be familiar to the general reader.

LEWIS H. THOMAS

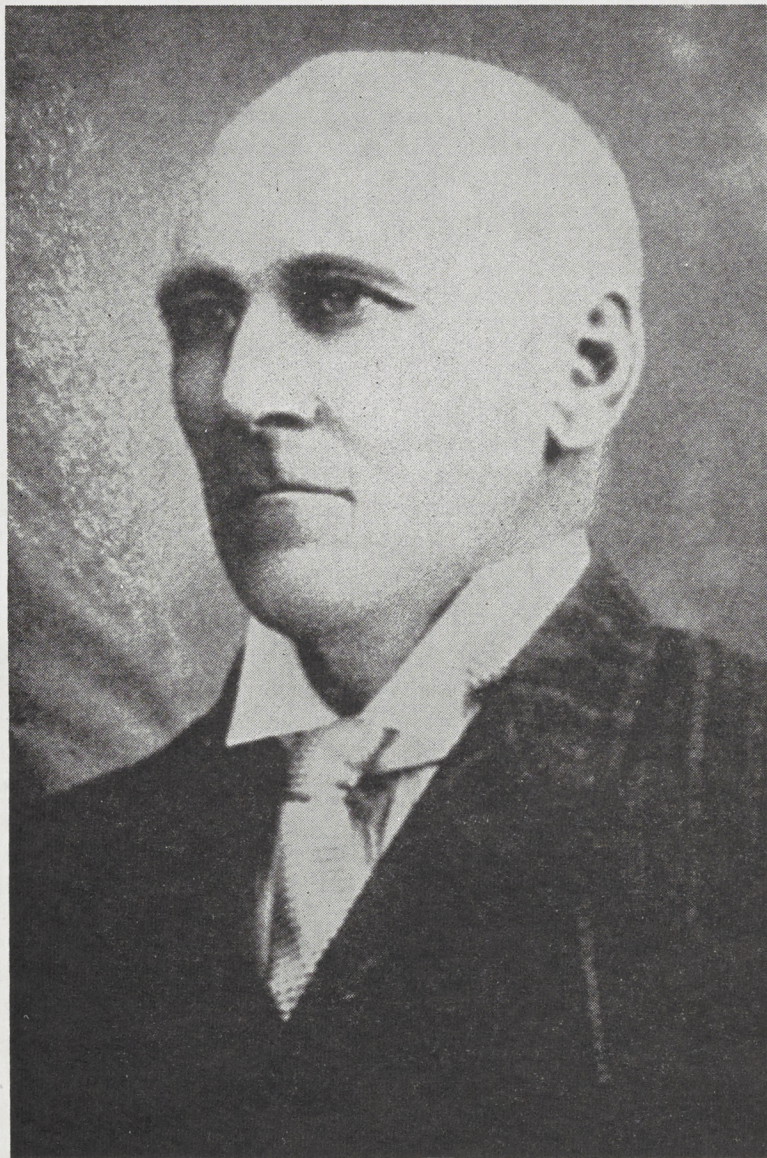
MY experience in the North-West began in 1880, when the block outline system of survey was inaugurated by the Department of the Interior, comprising blocks of 16 townships, to be later divided into townships and subdivided into sections, and in that year three block surveyors were sent out, viz., Capt. E. Deville, who afterwards became Surveyor-General, Mr. William Ogilvie, and myself. In that year my work extended westwards, along the Qu'Appelle Valley, from the second meridian near Fort Ellice to Fort Qu'Appelle.

Leaving Toronto in the spring of that year I proceeded by rail, via Chicago and Minneapolis, to St. Boniface on the east side of the Red River, and crossed the river by ferry to the embryo city of Winnipeg, or Fort Garry as it was still occasionally called. This little city, the gateway of the West and outfitting point for all survey parties and fur traders, did not then present a very favorable appearance. It consisted chiefly of wooden buildings and unpaved streets, in fact Main Street was a quagmire in which carts were frequently mired and I have seen boots left sticking in the unctuous adhesive clay which clung tenaciously to everything with which it came in contact. It was very difficult to avoid slipping and sliding on the sidewalks, giving the pedestrians the appearance of being somewhat under the influence of ardent spirits. On the outskirts of the city were numerous encampments of half-breed freighters, with their ponies and Red River carts, the latter constructed entirely of wood and without tires. Some of the carts had canopy covers and in these bedding was placed, providing comfortable quarters for the wives and younger children of the freighters who frequently accompanied them on their expeditions.⁵

In outfitting at Winnipeg, I was advised to use oxen instead of ponies to draw the Red River carts, as their hoofs would spread and they would not sink so deeply in crossing marshy ground, and having adopted the suggestion found them satisfactory.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ See Mary Weekes, *The Last Buffalo Hunter* (New York, 1939), pp. 207-209.



WILLIAM THOMAS THOMPSON, D.T.S., M.E.I.C.,
1853-1938

We left the last outpost of settlement when we crossed the Bird Tail Creek at Birtle, east of Fort Ellice, and the country westward to the Rocky Mountains was still "The Great Lone Land"—so aptly termed by General Butler. The scattered Indian population was being rounded up and placed in reserves by the North-West Mounted Police, and in some cases changes were made which caused some irritation and discontent, but the Police, although few in number, had won the respect of the natives by their fearless conduct, so there was a general feeling of security for life and property.

We crossed the Assiniboine River over the Hudson's Bay Company's bridge at Fort Ellice. This structure was ordered to be removed later on, as some official had reported that it would obstruct navigation. However, after it was taken down only one small stern wheeler ascended the Assiniboine as far as Fort Pelly, and on the trip back attempted the ascent of the Qu'Appelle River which joins the Assiniboine about three miles above Fort Ellice, but only got as far as Round Lake and had difficulty in returning. Both rivers were subject to great variations in water level and followed such winding courses that transport by water was unprofitable in any case.

The Hudson's Bay Company's post, Fort Ellice, stood in a courtyard surrounded by a high pallisade, its bastions with embrasures extended out and there were a few small brass cannon which could be used to sweep the walls. Archie McDonald, Chief Factor, was in charge here and gave us valuable advice and information which enabled us to soon reach our starting point on the second meridian a few miles above the forks of the Qu'Appelle.

On reaching Crooked Lake in the valley we found a small settlement of Saulteaux Indians under Chief Sakimay. They often came out to see the men digging pits and forming mounds and expressed their contempt for such work by saying, so my interpreter informed me, "White men dig holes and make heaps like a badger." Chief Sakimay on one occasion visited our camp and seeing one of our young men washing his clothes, said to him—according to the interpreter—"That is woman's work and if you wish I shall send you a wife." To this the young man thoughtlessly consented, regarding the offer a joke, but soon after a young woman arrived at the camp with a small bundle containing her trousseau. In response to her inquiry the prospective bridegroom was pointed out, but he protested that he didn't want a wife. However, the interpreter insisted that he had misled the chief, who had gone to the trouble of selecting a wife for him, that Indians despised a man who did not keep his word and that dire consequences would befall him unless suitable presents were made to the young woman and this having been done with the explanation that it was contrary to the rules to keep ladies in camp, she returned to her people somewhat mollified but by no means pleased with the outcome.

The land at that time was being laid out under the 2nd system of survey, with a road allowance of one and one-half chains around each section and the correction lines were being run and posted on each side with meridians between

every four ranges.⁶ I was engaged on the 5th correction line, viz., between townships 18 and 19, which crosses and recrosses the Qu'Appelle Valley, Mr. Ogilvie on the 7th, and we closed with each other on the 6th, thus enclosing blocks of 16 townships each. Capt. Deville was engaged in the Touchwood Hills region.

Our work that year terminated at Fort Qu'Appelle, a pallisaded post of the Hudson's Bay Company, in charge of Chief Trader W. G. McLean, and I was here much impressed by the picturesque valley with its chain of lakes from which great flocks of ducks arose with a noise resembling thunder and in such numbers as to darken the sky. Here pemmican, a compound of pounded buffalo meat and tallow filled into bags of buffalo hides, was obtainable, also dried buffalo steaks, but no buffalo had been killed in the near vicinity that year. This post was situated on a wide flat in the valley and about midway between the extremities of the Four Fishing Lakes, of which two lie to the east and two to the west. Here white fish of excellent quality were found, also buffalo fish, the latter reaching a weight of thirty-five pounds. Jack fish, or pike, were also numerous and attained a great size. One of these, in later years, was speared by a Sioux squaw of Standing Buffalo's reserve, in the lake west of the Fort, which weighed sixty pounds on the scales, in the presence of several witnesses, and I believe this to be a record for fish of this species.

From the Forks near Fort Ellice westward to Fort Qu'Appelle and beyond, the valley which is from three to four hundred feet deep and from one to two miles wide from rim to rim, with its expansions which form Round, Crooked and Fishing Lakes, displays a panorama of picturesque beauty which cannot be surpassed in western Canada. Chief Factor Archie McDonald always maintained that the lakes would compare with the lakes of Killarney, and the Marquis of Lorne, who came to the valley in 1881, called it, "The Incomparable Valley."

1880, 1881 and 1882 were years of unusually high water, rivers swollen and flooding the lower lands, lakes and ponds filled to the rim and overflowing. In fact in the spring months, in the country both north and south of the Qu'Appelle Valley, the many hay sloughs were so flooded and connected that we had to make wide detours. On the Pheasant Plains on several occasions we had to have a man on horseback test the best places to cross with our carts. I recall that in my report to the Surveyor-General, I stated that it would be possible to drain these sloughs, by channels leading to the Qu'Appelle Valley, at moderate expense. In the course of a few years, however, the dry cycle began and evaporation was so rapid that the ponds and marshes were soon effectively drained by the sun, and it was necessary in later years to construct reservoirs in the ravines and excavate dugouts on the plains, in order to hold the spring run-off, and settlers

⁶ The Second system of survey is similar to the First system of survey with 99-foot road allowances around each section but differs in that each north-south section line is made to converge whereas in the First system only the township east and west boundaries were made to converge with the result that the tier of quarter sections along the west boundary of the township were appreciably less than 160 acres.

The Second system is an improvement in that in a township area effect of convergence is distributed among the quarter sections in a row resulting in much greater uniformity in acreage of all the quarter sections in a township. Although the interior lines in the township were not run at this time by Mr. Thompson, provision for equalizing areas of quarters under the second system was provided in the survey corners established on the correction line. *A.I.B.*

who had read surveyors reports and settled in that area, complained that they had been misled. In 1886, a year of extreme drought, cracks opened several feet in width in many places, and I recall one on the trail near Balgonie dangerous to traffic. In that year many settlers left the country, but after a period of wandering most of them returned and found that their neighbors, who could not leave, had done fairly well, while they had to begin life again at the bottom.

Large areas in the southern portions of the three prairie provinces were always regarded by the surveyors as only suitable for grazing purposes and in the early days of the settlement were occupied by large ranches, but the hunger for homesteads resulted in extensive encroachment on these and in some cases eliminated them altogether. It is this area which has suffered so severely through extremely dry weather and has resulted in many of the settlers trekking north into the more favored bluff and timber lands.

In 1881, I again set out from Winnipeg, this time taking ponies instead of oxen. There were a number of half-breed freighters with ponies and Red River carts taking up supplies for the Hudson's Bay Company; these carts were composed entirely of wood, and as their axles were never oiled the horrible music of forty squeaking carts could be heard for miles. There was high water and the trail was wet and boggy, especially so in the Bad Woods west of Portage la Prairie after crossing Rat Creek. Here we had to pull the carts through a succession of bog holes; the men at times were up to their waists in mud holding up the shafts, while the pony, having been taken forward to firm ground, drew it out by means of a strong rope with the assistance of members of the party. Our progress through the Bad Woods was very slow, and we were here passed by some half-breed freighters, who certainly succeeded in making better progress, but by a method of which I could not approve and always regarded as barbarous. They usually had several extra ponies running along side, and when a cart got stuck in a mud hole, one of these would be taken forward to firm ground, a lariat with a running noose attached to its tail, and the other end to the collar of the pony in the cart. The driver then by the vigorous use of a black snake whip, at the same time shouting, "*Sacre marchez donc,*" urged the unfortunate pony to put forth all its strength, and in every case that came under my observation, the cart was speedily extricated. I frequently expostulated regarding this barbarous proceeding, suggesting that a collar should be used, but was informed that a pony could pull as much with its tail as with a collar and that it did not hurt the pony; the fact that it was no uncommon thing to see ponies with parts of their tails missing did not confirm their statements.

At McKinnon's in the Sand Hills we reached the second prairie steppe, and our progress thence westward became less difficult; the country being higher, there was better drainage and fewer quagmires. Proceeding to Fort Qu'Appelle, I extended the sixth base westward.

On my way to Fort Qu'Appelle, and when about where Sinaluta now stands, I had quite a thrilling experience with two of Sitting Bull's braves. After the

Custer massacre at the battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876, Sitting Bull with a large band of Sioux warriors sought refuge in Canada, locating at Wood Mountain in the North-West Territories, and in coming north drove as many as possible of the buffalo before them. In the following years his scouts roamed over the plains as far north as Qu'Appelle. On this occasion I was on horseback and two or three miles in advance of my party, when my attention was drawn to some smoke curling up near the trail a little distance ahead, and on approaching nearer, I was surprised to see two figures crouching over a small fire. These I supposed at first were a couple of squaws, but as I approached, to my surprise, two stalwart Indian warriors stood up, very large, muscular men fully six feet in height; they were entirely naked, with the exception of a small piece of tanned buffalo hide around their loins, retained in place by a thong of the same passing over one shoulder; also each had a formidable club slung over his shoulder by a leather thong. They were certainly the most barbaric specimens of humanity I had ever seen, and noticing that there was no one else in sight they gave uncanny chuckles and one stepped quickly up to me, holding out his hand with the usual Sioux salutation, "How, How!" My party not being in sight, I was somewhat doubtful as to what course to take, especially as the expression in the eyes of the savage gave me a most uncomfortable sensation, and I felt sure that if I gave him my hand I would come off the saddle. Nevertheless, I held out my hand hesitantly. However, on his taking another step toward me, my pony plunged wildly to one side and taking advantage of this diversion, being quite unarmed, I deemed it advisable to fall back on my reserves, so wheeling around trotted back towards my party, which was now looming up in the distance. On looking back the braves were seen following quickly and it now appeared that the formidable clubs, which I had at first supposed were war clubs and used exclusively for macerating their enemies, could at least be used for other purposes, as one of the braves was seen to step aside, unslinging his club and use it for digging up wild turnips, one end being sloped for that purpose. On reaching my cart train each savage opened his mouth and placed his finger in it to indicate no doubt that they were hungry. Peter Sinclair, a member of my party conversant with the native languages, informed me that these were Sitting Bull's men, that Sitting Bull with a large band had come up from Wood Mountain and was encamped in a ravine nearby, and he advised me not to give them anything, as if I did we would have the whole band after us and our supplies would not make a mouthful for them. However, we gave them some matches and a little tobacco.

Later, when my party was encamped near Fort Qu'Appelle, Sitting Bull, accompanied by several counsellors, called to interview me. I was absent at the time, but my assistant, on my return, informed me that he expressed his desire to obtain a reserve in that district, claiming that the country to the south was an old hunting ground of his people and that he had come up to present his claim personally to the Marquis of Lorne, the Governor-General, who he understood from the Mounted Police would soon arrive at the Fort. The Marquis arrived in August, accompanied by a bodyguard of Mounted Police. The horses were unhitched and his carriage dragged into the court-yard by the assemblage, where

addresses were delivered and later on the curious buffalo dance was performed in his honour by the Indians. Many Sioux braves remained near the Fort for sometime and were frequent visitors to our camp, carrying American army rifles, belts and equipment which they had taken at the time of the Custer massacre. They informed us that there were buffalo about half a day's journey south which had crossed the line in large herds and the Indians from Qu'Appelle and the Touchwood Hills had gone out to hunt them. We did not, however, see any that season, but near Moose Jaw Creek came across their beds and other indications of their presence in that locality.

It was during that summer that I had an attack of quinsy, quite the most severe illness of my life, and Sitting Bull hearing of it, sent his medicine man to cure me. The medicine man was brought into my tent by my interpreter, who then left us alone. He was a ferocious looking savage, loaded with bells and dangling bones, his face so grotesquely painted that it gave him a diabolical expression. Immediately he jumped into a mad dance accompanied by wierd incantations. He leaped and whirled about in wild gyrations and the countless bells and bones jangled and clanged against one another and made a horrible din. Lying ill in bed and all alone with the savage I must admit feeling quite uneasy. However, his dance and incantations finally ended and the medicine man then set to work and made a pungent brew out of some roots he had brought with him. This concoction he then brought to my bed for me to drink, I was reluctant to do this as he had stirred it with a very grimy thumb before handing it to me, but not being in a position to refuse, I gulped it down. Next morning I was better, whether it was due to the incantations or the brew I cannot say.

In this year, 1881, the 3rd system of survey was adopted, road allowances being reduced to one chain in width and only three road allowances running east and west in each township. Also the base lines were run instead of the correction lines, with meridians between every four ranges as formerly.⁷ I was running the 6th base line west from Fort Qu'Appelle and the 8th west from the Touchwood Hills, Edgar Bray on the 7th, and Major Webb to the south on the 5th, closing with each other, and terminating in all cases at the third meridian.

In all this territory the deeply cut buffalo trails leading to water by the most direct and favorable routes, indicated a considerable degree of intelligence on the part of these animals, and their engineering ability in contouring the banks of the valleys was frequently remarked on. Over the whole region their bleached bones were scattered, (in some cases complete skeletons), indicating the enormous number that had been slaughtered, chiefly for their hides, in former years. The Indians would not believe that the buffalo had been nearly exterminated and insisted they must have gone into holes in the ground and confidently expected they would return. Elk horns were also very plentiful, being

⁷ Thompson in this year, as in the year preceding, was engaged in the outline of a 16 township block which would later serve as the framework for the subdivision of the townships into sections and quarters. Under the Third system, the base line rather than correction line became the line which was most carefully established and from which the various east and west boundaries of the township would be run. *A.I.B.*

shed every year; we only saw one herd of about twenty on the south bank of the Qu'Appelle, opposite the south end of Long Lake, but there was every indication that they had been numerous in former times. Bands of cabrie, (prong horned antelope) were frequently seen, and near where Moose Jaw is now situated I saw a herd of about forty going to water. These little animals were very inquisitive and when any strange objects were seen, they circled around it, gradually approaching nearer until their curiosity was satisfied when they sped swiftly away. It was usually through their curiosity that they were lured to destruction. The hunter attached a piece of cloth or handkerchief to a stick, and lying flat on the ground raised his little flag for a moment, when the antelope, attracted by this unusual object commenced their circling movement. The flag was then again raised, but only for a moment and in this way these little animals were brought within range. But they were so small and swift in their movements that many shots would be fired without effect. My assistant, who was a lieutenant in a volunteer company and had a Snider-Enfield rifle, expended a considerable amount of ammunition on them without result, and he was considered a very fair marksman. In all my experience on the plains we only secured one of these animals, which was shot south of Edmonton, and we found the meat superior to any other that I know of.

In April, 1882, I set out with an expedition to the Peace River country, extending the 4th base line from the third to the fourth meridian and completing the 6th base line en route. Winnipeg was jammed full the first night I arrived, at one-thirty A.M. I went to four or five hotels to get a room and eventually had to turn in with a strange man at the Winnipeg House. That, however, was only for one night and I then got a comfortable room at three dollars a day. A blockade had occurred on the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba line near St. Vincent which delayed some of the party for a time; all, however, eventually arrived in Winnipeg, but owing to a washout on the line between Winnipeg and Brandon no trains were leaving for the west for a time. The track, however, opened shortly and I sent all the party to Flat Creek to camp until our carts and supplies arrived. Fortunately, my car of supplies arrived all right and passed on to Brandon.

The C.P.R. was under construction and open for traffic to Flat Creek, about a hundred and sixty miles westward. Here a town of tents grew up, as day after day the heavily laden trains came in crowded with immigrants, contractors, survey parties, land speculators, and other adventurers, all bound for the west and waiting for the spring freshets to subside to pull out with their carts and outfits. The great depth of snow as it disappeared covered the country with water, and it was towards the end of May before the swollen streams could be crossed. Flat Creek was the terminus of the railway at that time, the farthest point to which passengers were brought, although construction trains ran forty miles further and were due to arrive in Qu'Appelle about the first of July. Qu'Appelle seemed to be the place that everyone was going to, judging from what people said and a great rush was expected from this point as soon as the spring opened. Two of the men I had the previous year were going into farming near Qu'Appelle and I arranged with them to pilot the party. Oats at Qu'Appelle cost three

dollars per bushel and 85 cents in Winnipeg, oxen two hundred or two hundred and fifty dollars for a very ordinary yoke, and Indian ponies a hundred dollars each.

My party arrived safely in Flat Creek on April 18th and remained camped there until I came up from Winnipeg, which owing to washouts was not until May 13th. We were then further delayed in starting owing to the carts not having arrived which had been contracted for by the Department some time before. Towards the end of May, I obtained the wagons and carts and started the party westward, but it could not have gone much sooner owing to the state of the trail, and freshets made some of the creeks almost impossible until then. It had been very cold for some days and there was ice on some of the ponds.

Leaving Flat Creek our route westward followed the projected line of the C.P.R., skirting the valleys of the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle Rivers across numerous streams and sloughs through country dotted with clumps of poplar and willow alternating with wide stretches of prairie. The scrub and timber usually encircled ponds of water and these generally abounded with water fowl.

The new form of Red River cart with iron axles and tires was a great improvement, and with them most of the survey parties were equipped. The great advantage of the cart over the wagon in crossing streams and miry sloughs was now manifested; these carts drawn by a cayuse or pony would carry 800 to 1000 pounds and by swinging from side to side would generally pass over the softest bottoms, while with the heavily laden wagons the hind wheels would settle down in the mire and it was often necessary to attach a strong rope to the tongue or front axle and with an extra team on the firm ground haul the wagon out. It was sometimes necessary to assist the carts through in a similar manner.

Leaving the Fort on the 15th we passed out of the valley and skirted along it to the westward through a park-like country and on the morning of the 18th entered the great buffalo plains, which stretched westward to the Rocky Mountains with scarcely a tree or shrub except along the streams and water courses.

My starting point for the 4th base line on the third meridian was near the south end of Old Wives Lake, or Lake Johnstone as it is now called, and a bird sanctuary has since been established there. At that time a few Canada geese nested there and in the creek flowing out of it we captured a couple of goslings in a slough which we tethered and intended fattening in the expectation of having roast goose later on, but it happened that a stampede of the ponies into the slough caused them to break the tethers and they escaped.

The region west of Old Wives Lake was evidently a favorite resort of the buffalo as there was a short sweet grass known as buffalo grass and many saucer shaped pits, or wallows, where the buffalo tore up the ground and threw dust over themselves and then laid down in the wallow. It was in this region, a few miles west of the lake that I first caught sight of a wild buffalo. Seeing a large object upon a knoll about a mile distant I turned the telescope on it, when to my great satisfaction there appeared clearly in the field of view, switching its

tail vigorously to keep off the flies, one of the few remaining specimens of the American bison. Returning to camp with my assistant, Lt. Vicars, I equipped him with a Hotchkiss repeater, as he was considered a fair marksman, and armed myself with our remaining gun (a double barrelled 10 gauge Parker), in which we placed double charges of buckshot. Thus prepared we sallied forth, informing the cook that he would likely be called upon to dish up some bison steaks for our evening repast.

The bison, or buffalo as it is usually but erroneously designated, had now disappeared from the knoll, but on reaching it we found his tracks or spoor and noted that he had gone up a dry coulee. Following this until we reached a low ridge, we saw on the opposite side the top of his hump projecting a little above it. We were now within about thirty yards, but not in a very favorable position for a shot. He was evidently lying on the hillside, in one of those old saucer shaped wallows which at that time dotted the prairie. Moving a little to one side my foot happened to strike a small stone and started it rolling down the ridge, when the buffalo rose suddenly and started off at a gallop. My assistant fired several shots, but without any apparent effect and as for myself, before I had recovered from my surprise at the strange appearance of the huge animal he was too far away for buckshot to have any effect on him. He pursued a perfectly straight course and without slackening his pace went right through a slough where my party was having lunch. Two of the men fired their revolvers at him, but without causing him to swerve in the least. To our surprise, the cook and his assistant were now seen with a pony and a cart hurrying towards us and it appeared that believing that we were sure to bag the buffalo, he had made preparations to salt it down on the spot, for which purpose he was bringing a barrel and a quantity of salt. Great therefore, was his disappointment when he saw the meat which he had anticipated roasting and preparing in various ways, bounding briskly over the prairie and disappearing in the distance.

Later on, however, when farther west, I was successful in shooting one of these animals near Maple Creek, after a pursuit on horse-back of over twenty miles. When in pursuit I would take an occasional shot with my revolver which had the effect of checking his speed; he nearly charged me on several occasions and when he finally stood and turned broadside, I fired at close range, and shot him through the heart, when to my great surprise, he jumped fully four feet into the air and turning completely over, fell on his back. I regarded this as extraordinary, but hunters tell me this is not unusual when an animal is shot through the heart. Mr. Ogilvie also shot one the same season not far from Calgary.

To the best of my knowledge, the last wild prairie buffalo in Canada was killed near Moose Mountain in Saskatchewan in 1886, but in the far north, south of Great Slave Lake and west of Slave River, there was still a comparatively small herd of wood buffalo estimated at from three to five hundred, which were being slaughtered by natives and destroyed by wolves. Fortunately, however, the Department of the Interior took timely steps to prevent the extinction of these fine animals, and in 1907 purchased from Michael Pablo of Montana,

seven hundred and nine, which were transferred to the Wainwright enclosure in Alberta. This herd has increased rapidly and the time will no doubt come when they will provide an important source of revenue.

The belt of country covered by the 1882 season's surveys in the south, extending from the third to the fourth meridian, a distance of over a hundred and eighty miles from east to west and twenty-four miles wide from north to south, was practically destitute of wood for fuel, there being only a little scrub along creeks and water courses and although there was a good supply in the Cypress Hills the distance was found too great; so after hauling one load we relied chiefly on the bleached bones and dried droppings or chips of the buffalo, which were scattered everywhere. The cook would send out his assistant with a sack to collect the latter and they made a very fair fire, while the bleached bones when saturated with coal oil were found excellent for baking when a hot fire was needed. I made this discovery the previous season and had, therefore, provided a drum of coal oil for this purpose. I may say that I was often amazed at the speed with which the cook made his biscuits; he mixed them in the top of the flour sack and fifteen minutes after we had set up camp, they were ready for the table.

By the end of August we reached the fourth meridian, longitude 110° west, and having also completed the work on the sixth base, we struck out for Edmonton on our way to the Peace River. As a great deal of interest was now being taken in the Peace River country, the Department of the Interior decided to extend the block outline system westward to fix the position of the sixth meridian, and extend a base to the British Columbia boundary (the 120^{th} degree of longitude.) It had been arranged early in the year that Mr. Ogilvie and myself would remain in the field for about eighteen months and after completing our work in the south, proceed to Edmonton and extend the system from a point on the Fifth Meridian west of that place. It was known that there was an error of latitude in the posting on the Fifth, but Mr. King, Chief Astronomer, had not determined the exact amount and it was arranged that Mr. Ogilvie would extend the Fifth when information was received and I would take my party to the mouth of the Lesser Slave and run a traverse westward,⁸ utilizing the ice on Lesser Slave River and Lake, the latter giving a clear stretch of about seventy-five miles. Mr. Ogilvie, on reaching the Athabasca, would connect with my initial point and I would extend the traverse to the Sixth and run that Meridian north across the Peace and if time permitted extend a base to the British Columbia boundary.

We went to Edmonton by way of the forks of the Red Deer River, where we crossed the South Saskatchewan by means of a large boat made of buffalo skins stretched over a wooden frame, and owned by a half-breed residing there, who charged a high price for its use. There was no trail beyond the forks so we

⁸ A traverse consists of a number of straight survey courses generally conforming to the shore of a lake. By surveying on the ice of Lesser Slave Lake necessity for cutting survey lines through the woods was avoided which expedited the work of traversing. The traverse survey not only outlined the shore of Lesser Slave Lake and the river but its correct location and distance relative to the Fifth and Sixth Meridians was established. *A.I.B.*

maintained a fairly direct course by means of a prismatic compass, and reached Edmonton in September. On the way up we occasionally saw buffalo, but never more than two together and had no time to hunt them. Mr. Ogilvie, who had instructions to extend the Fifth Meridian north across the Athabaska River, now arrived from the south, and having completed my equipment at Edmonton as far as possible, my party set out for Fort Assiniboine on the Athabaska, intending to descend the river to the mouth of the Lesser Slave, where my work was to commence. However, when we reached the crossing of the North Pembina River on the 28th of September, there was a considerable fall of snow, and as two young Englishmen, Milton and Hayes, who went to the Peace River country the previous year, had constructed a flat boat here and descended the Pembina to the Athabaska, we concluded that although the water was low, the melting of the snow would raise the water sufficiently to do the same. The scaffolding erected by them for whip-sawing lumber for their boats was still in place, and utilizing it for the same purpose we soon had two boats ready for the trip down the river. I had with me an old lake captain who thoroughly understood this class of work. He was particularly strong on what he called "corking," and urged the necessity of having this properly done, in order that the boats might be sea-worthy, so the matter was left in his hands and in our descent of the river one of the boats was placed in his charge. He was now quite in his element, and used so many seafaring terms in issuing his orders the men often didn't understand and in consequence did not always comply with his wishes. This always led to trouble and he would appeal to me to know if he was not in charge of the vessel. We occasionally grounded on sand bars, but by shifting cargo always managed to free the boats and reached the Athabaska and descended to the mouth of the Lesser Slave without mishap. At this point I had expected a York boat of the Hudson's Bay Company to meet me, but for some reason it did not arrive and we concluded to try and tow our boats up by reducing the loads and making several trips. The Lesser Slave for eighteen miles above its mouth is very rapid and we had strenuous work, but got our supplies through to the lake before the ice formed.

After the ice had set the captain decided to try his luck fishing through the ice near the island at the foot of the lake. He cut a hole and using a large hook baited it with a piece of bacon, and had no sooner dropped his hook into the water when it was seized by an immensely large salmon weighing fully twenty-five pounds. With this he returned to the camp in triumph and assured me that the food supply problem was solved; but although he fished at the same place most assiduously afterwards, he never got another fish. Large numbers of white fish were, however, caught by the Indians with nets, and these we obtained from the Hudson's Bay Company at the rate of \$1.50 per hundred.

During the winter all my line traverse was performed by dog trains and by March 10th the traverse line had been projected westerly about twenty-five miles from Lesser Slave Lake, from thence the line was continued in a general westerly direction passing through partly open country until within a few miles of Smoky River, when thickly timbered ridges of poplar and spruce, separated by wide marshes, were encountered. On April 5th, before the ice broke up, my camp

was shifted to the west side of Smoky River without trouble and further transport by dog sled being impossible, the dogs and drivers were sent back to Lesser Slave Lake. On the 8th of April the alignment was carried across the river and further work on the line discontinued owing to the wet state of the country. Not having heard from Mr. Ogilvie as to the latitude and longitude of my initial point at the mouth of the Lesser Slave River, I was not able to determine my longitude, but according to Dr. G. M. Dawson's map the 118th meridian would be about two miles west of my camp. I then occupied myself with obtaining observations for latitude by transit over the prime vertical and making computations of the difference of azimuth between those points on the line on which observations were taken.⁹ The small errors of alignment were then computed and applied.

As it was important to get some pack horses and other equipment from the Hudson's Bay Company at Dunvegan on the Peace River, I set out with two men for that point. Reaching the Peace we found the river open, and constructing a raft crossed it as we supposed and let our raft drift down stream; proceeding towards the bank we found ourselves on a sand bar with a channel of about fifty yards to cross. There were several large cakes of ice stranded along this bar and my two companions, who were experienced river men, concluded we could cross on these. As this seemed the only solution to the difficulty I agreed to let one of them try it, and if he was successful I would accompany the other. When we let the raft go, we had fortunately retained our poles and the single man having made the passage safely, we selected a large cake of ice, and crossing over in like manner also made the passage without mishap. The valley of the Peace here was about seven hundred feet deep and three miles wide from rim to rim. The river itself was about a quarter of a mile wide and twenty feet deep with a current of about six miles per hour.

We now struck a footpath leading along the valley bank, and following this reached, towards evening, a small but comfortable log house on the upland. We found this to be occupied by Milton and Hayes who had come in the previous year; here we spent the night. Mr. Milton was a relative of the Lord Milton who with Dr. Cheadle made an overland journey across Canada in 1862-1863.

At Dunvegan I engaged an Iroquios hunter by the name of White Bear and his brother-in-law, a young Cree, and also obtained several pack horses. Crossing the river, we set out for our camp on the Smoky. On reaching the Little Burnt River we found it very much swollen, however two of my men thought they would be able to cross our supplies over by means of a raft. We soon had one constructed, and placing on it pack saddles, etc., the two men took their places and pulled out from shore. The current, however, was too strong for them and the raft swung downstream. I ran with the two Indians along the bank, but we lost sight of the raft at a bend of the river and when we again came in sight of it, it was whirling around in an eddy with no men on it, but their hats were seen

⁹ Apparently the 118th meridian was established by heavier and more precise type of survey instrument, whereas Thompson, due to weight limitations imposed by the use of dog team, had to rely on smaller and less finely graduated instruments. On reaching the 118th Meridian Thompson applied a small correction to the various courses of the traverse so as to conform with the more precise observations of the 118th Meridian. *A.I.B.*

floating on the water. By means of a long pole we managed to draw the raft to shore, and the Indians informed me in Cree, that the men in falling off the raft, must have struck stones in the river and were killed and carried down by the current. We went along the bank for some distance, but seeing no signs of their bodies, I concluded we could do no good by remaining longer, and gathering up the pack saddles, etc., we were just leaving the river when I heard a shout, and looking back to my astonishment saw the two men on the opposite bank. They explained that the raft having touched that bank of the river they had jumped off, but being unable to hold the raft they had run through the woods across a point expecting to get it again further down, but not seeing it after following the river for a couple of miles, concluded that it was useless to go further and returned. We were unable to find a place where the men could cross the river that night, so we passed them a pail with provisions, by first tying a pebble to a long piece of twine, of which I had obtained a quantity at Dunvegan, and throwing it across the river, which was only about fifty feet wide, a stronger cord was then drawn across and secured to a tree on each side, having been first pulled through the bail of the pail, and then it was pulled back and forth with supplies by means of a cord attached to it.

My hunter having shot a beaver, cooked the tail for me. This is regarded as a great delicacy; to me it had a disagreeable beaverish taste. He also gave me an example of his remarkable marksmanship: a couple of wild geese being noticed at some distance, he stationed himself at a small bluff and imitated their call; then when they came circling over him at a distance of about one hundred yards, fired and dropped one of them. Seeing a duck in a pond at a distance of about seventy-five yards I asked him if he could shoot it, when he immediately fired and blew its head off, and frequently along our route when partridges were seen in the trees, he fired and decapitated them in the same way. All this was done with a forty-four Winchester repeater, and appeared to me marvellous; in fact if I had not seen it I would not have believed it possible.

Finding from the approximate longitude of the mouth of the Lesser Slave River that we were still some distance east of the 118th meridian, work on the line was resumed on May 6th, on which date six pack horses were got in from Dunvegan. On the 28th I received a note from Mr. Ogilvie giving me my initial point on the mouth of the Slave River and saw that I had yet two miles to run before reaching the longitude of the 118th, and on the 30th a line was completed to it. As there had been considerable difference between the calculated and observed latitudes I deemed it advisable to take a series of observations at different points along the meridian before finally establishing them. The spring was warm and favorable with the trees in leaf and a number of flowers in bloom, although there were rather too many mosquitoes for comfort. My transport which had been performed by dog sled in winter was now done by using ponies, twenty in all. By the end of May the boats had commenced to run on Lesser Slave Lake and communication with Edmonton was not so difficult.

In June we crossed the Peace River with the sixth meridian. Mr. Ogilvie, who had extended the fifth north of the Athabaska, finding the country there

very swampy and unfit for immediate settlement had come to the Peace River country where surveys seemed to be more urgently required, and we worked in conjunction to some extent. We concluded to each take further observations for latitude, but the weather continued very cloudy and unfavorable and while I could continue on the meridian, Mr. Ogilvie's party was being held up pending further observations, and as the weather did not permit of these being taken the subdivision was started from the provisional points; soon after encountering heavy cutting on the meridian, I turned west and extended the base to the 120th meridian, the British Columbia boundary.

Bear and moose were plentiful and our hunter kept us well supplied with meat, but I must say that moose is very much to be preferred to bear; the bear, especially in summer, being very stringy and with a rather disagreeable flavour. He also brought several cubs to the camp, and one of these, a little black fellow, we kept for a pet for several months and I had intended taking him home with me, but unfortunately, on one occasion when the hunter left on a visit to his family, our supplies which were to have been forwarded on from Dunvegan were delayed for a considerable time, and as I had a large party we were reduced to very short rations. I told one of the Indians that if supplies did not come in that evening he would have to kill the bear in the morning, which he agreed to do, but when morning came he told me he could not do it, as it would seem like killing a child, I therefore said we would wait another day; however, as the supplies failed to reach us we had to dispatch him, having no other food supply available.¹⁰

Early in October we started back on our return journey to civilization, descending the Peace River from Fort St. John to the foot of the Rockies by means of a raft as far as Dunvegan, then by York boat to the Landing, and thence by cart, about seventy-five miles to Lesser Slave Lake, where we obtained another York boat and a pilot to guide it down the rapids of the Lesser Slave, as the water being low, they were reported difficult to run.

We were now informed that Michael, a leading man among the Crees at the lake, who regarded him as their chief, intended to collect toll from us before we left the country, for as there was no treaty with the Indians he considered that we were trespassing on their domain. He was then engaged with a number of others in fall fishing near the foot of the lake and as Mr. Ogilvie's party had already escaped his vigilance and left the country without paying toll, he was reported to be determined to levy toll on me. We regarded the matter as a joke, for I am sure that Michael and his party were much more afraid of us than we were of them, as he had previously threatened me when I was at the lake without

¹⁰ *Editor's Note:* Mr. George F. Thompson, a son of the author, makes the following comment on this portion of the narrative:

"A very close call that my father and two of his men had about this time, he has not included in this account, as he believed that all hardships should be minimized. It happened when he expected to get supplies at a certain post but when they arrived there they found it closed and had to make their way to the next post. For days they were completely without food, and lived on the inside bark of the trees and on a certain type of moss; they were nearly desperate and he said they were thankful for their thick leather boots which they chewed to get some nourishment, when providentially they happened to meet an Indian who had some fish. They got some from him and these set them up so they managed to reach the next post."

result; yet to avoid delay I deemed it advisable to give the fishing camp as wide a berth as possible, and the wind being favorable, hoisting a sail we made good progress and soon reached the river. As we approached it we saw a number of Indians running after us along the beach, but if it was their intention to intercept us they were too late; we were only amused by their antics and left them far behind.

We descended the river without mishap and reached Athabaska Landing, sixty miles below its mouth, just as the ice was beginning to form. Here we found a freighter of the Hudson's Bay Company, which provided us with transport to Edmonton, a distance of about one hundred miles. Remaining there for a few days to get our carts, etc., in order, we then continued the journey to Calgary, a further distance of about two hundred miles, where we arrived about the middle of November, 1883. The railway had now reached that point and we were back again in civilization.

W. T. THOMPSON

RECOLLECTIONS AND REMINISCENCES—as told to Shirley I. Paustian

Pioneering on the Soo Line¹

THE pioneer who brought his family and a few scattered possessions west in a covered wagon, looking to the future to give him a better deal than he had had in the past, is a familiar figure in western history. Covered wagons bunched into small caravans for protection from Indian attack, or crossed the trackless land separately, in bold defiance of the dangers reputed to lurk behind every knoll. The first hard winter spent in sod shanty or dugout far from any supply centre; the slow oxen which broke the prairie sod and the meagre equipment with which the settler was forced to manage until a few crops brought money for horses and machinery—these are the commonplaces of western pioneer settlement.

Saskatchewan has accepted this pioneer legend without too much question, but the legend is American rather than Canadian. The railroad, long awaited by homesteaders in the prairie states, preceded most of the settlement in Saskatchewan, and the existence of the railroad necessarily affected the type of early settlement.

By 1900, when settlement turned its eyes to Saskatchewan, almost half a century had elapsed since settlement pushed west of the Mississippi in the United States. The pioneers of Iowa and Minnesota and Nebraska and the Dakotas were old settlers, and even the wilds of Wyoming and Idaho had taken on a settled look. Prairie farming and western pioneering were no longer exciting and hazardous adventure. They were established fact. There were men who had farmed the prairie, and their sons who knew prairie farms from birth, to view the possibilities of the new country with experienced eyes.

And view it they did, but not from the seat of a covered wagon or the back of a scrubby range-bred pony as many of their predecessors had done. These men came in style, brought from more or less prosperous farming communities in Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri and the Dakotas, travelling in the ultra-modern heated coaches of special trains brought together for their convenience. With them, on some of the trains, came new chain-driven automobiles, to carry them out in search of land when they reached their destination.

The author of all these wonders was a land settlement company whose name has become legend along the Soo line—the Luse Land Company. This company was largely instrumental in settling the Soo line district, one of the richest farming districts in Saskatchewan. The Soo Line railroad, which extends

¹ The information in this article is based on oral traditions still current in the Rouleau and Wilcox districts, and also on interviews with the following pioneers: E. L. Plank, W. T. Botkin and Mrs. Gill Ball, all of Rouleau and Mr. and Mrs. C. Zerfing of Wilcox. The reader may wish to refer to Seward T. St. John's article "Homesteading at Wilcox," in *Saskatchewan History*, Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 23-27 and "Mrs. St. John's Diary" *ibid.*, Vol. II, No. 2, pp. 25-28.

from St. Paul to Portal on the international boundary, and thence to its northern terminus at Moose Jaw, was started in 1889 and completed in 1893.

The Luse Land Company was a Canadian company operating out of St. Paul, which purchased 400,000 acres of land between Yellow Grass and Rouleau from the Canadian Pacific Railway, and sold them to land-seeking Americans. Prospective buyers were brought up on special trains to choose their land, and returned the following year, with their families and their farming gear, to take possession. Twelve chain-driven Reo automobiles were carried on some of the trains, and in these the prospective buyers rode in state across the unmarked prairies, to see the land before they paid for it in good hard cash. Others viewed their prospective acres eagerly from seats in a caravan of buckboards, which wound an apparently aimless course across the open prairie. Bidding was brisk, and land seekers in the trailing buckboards frequently rose to proclaim their intention of purchasing a section ahead, not yet examined.

These were no homesteaders, out in search of free land. These men who settled the Soo line were rich men, in comparison with the oxen-driving pioneers of the covered wagon era. They had money to invest in the rich prairie soil. They had plows to break the land with, and horses to pull their implements, and they paid their way as they went along.

The first group to arrive came to the Wilcox district in 1902, before the town of Wilcox existed. In those days of pioneer directness not even the railroads had time for red tape. The settlers were landed unceremoniously at their destinations by the simple process of taking up the rails, pointing them out on the prairie, and rolling the emigrant cars off on the ground. Then, tracks replaced, the train proceeded on its way, leaving the settler to cope with his own transportation problem from there on.

Later, as the towns sprang up along the Soo line, more sophisticated methods were employed. But even as late as 1906 the service was fairly primitive, and the immigrant who brought in his gear by means of an immigrant car had trials and problems which his oxen-driving forbears would have viewed with dismay.

Oxen travel was slow, but relatively steady. Train travel on a colonist train was subject to strange delays. Sometimes the settlers found themselves sitting idly by a stalled train, waiting for the wind to go down so that the train could proceed. Weeds grew thickly in the earth on which the tracks were laid, and a strong wind bent them down across the rails so that the train could not travel. Even at best the travel was slow, with delays up to 24 hours at divisional points.

The delays had their advantage. Ten days to two weeks was required for the trip from St. Paul, and feed for the stock, to last for that period, could not be carried on the train. The long stops enabled settlers to replenish their feed supplies, and rest their stock. Meals were eaten along the way, the train crew and passengers alike patronising the restaurants and rough hotels of the little pioneer towns.

Most of the immigrants brought a car-load of equipment each. The cost of shipping the car varied from \$60 to \$96, depending on the distance and the year. Prices

advanced slightly as settlement progressed. This price allowed for transportation for one man with each car, to tend the stock and take responsibility for the shipment. Frequently, however, a second or third attendant stowed away among the various boxes and animals and pieces of machinery, undetected by railroad officials or intentionally overlooked.

The cars themselves were masterpieces of packing. What you could put in the car you were entitled to bring, and the thrifty pioneers wasted little space. Spring and mattress to be used for sleeping during the journey were placed at the top of a mountain of furniture, or sleeping accommodation (particularly if an unpaid guest shared the car) was tucked cozily inside an inverted wagon box underneath the pile, and reached by crawling on hands and knees through a tunnel of packing boxes. The stock (horses, cattle and chickens for the most part) occupied one end of the car, and furniture and machinery and household equipment the other. Canned fruit, brought in abundance as insurance of food for the coming year, was placed in boxes, and around it was poured oats or barley to serve the double purpose of packing for the glass fruit jars and future feed for the stock. Boxes and barrels of provisions frequently included food for the whole family for a year and a half or two years—sufficient to last until a crop could be expected from the new land.

Those train journeys were leisurely, friendly affairs. The men who travelled with the cars spent much of the time visiting back and forth, playing cards, smoking or talking, in the cars or in the caboose attached at the rear for their convenience. Men from different states exchanged friendly gossip, talked of their future homes, and formed friendships which were frequently continued in future years.

One train, coming west in the spring of 1906, was composed of 34 cars, 16 of them destined for Rouleau. Leaving St. Paul March 6th, it wended its way slowly and casually north and west to the international border.

The conductor was a friendly man—too friendly with some poker-playing settlers who were well supplied with liquor—and before many days had passed the responsibility of the train had passed to the shoulders of one of the trainmen and the conductor was left to his conviviality. Less genial drunk than sober, he soon fell afoul of some of his passengers. A quiet man, who sat reading in the caboose oblivious of the smoke and noise and confusion around him, was the first victim. Lurching into the car the conductor eyed him with disfavour.

"We don't allow reading on this train," he said gruffly, knocking the book to the floor. The quiet man retrieved his book and departed, but his report to company officials later brought about the conductor's discharge.

More direct in showing his resentment was a tall Kentucky farmer, who had come armed with a revolver. Reports that some of the colonist cars had been robbed as they sat in freight yards in St. Paul where the trains were made up, were responsible for the presence of more than one weapon among the settlers. The quick temper of the Kentuckian flared, at the jibes of the surly drunken

conductor. He drew his revolver and was only prevented from using it by the quick intervention of a more cautious friend.

These two were escorting cars which were situated near the end of the train, and like the rest of the men, before many days had passed they were visiting back and forth among the other cars. It became their custom, when returning to the rear after visiting in one of the front cars, to step off and wait while the slow moving train brought their belongings up to them, rather than to walk the length of the 34 cars.

Once, as they stepped off the front of the train to wait for it to pass them, they noticed it begin to pick up speed. The Kentuckian swung back up on the next car and walked back along the top of the train, but his friend waited it out. He waited too long. It was 14 miles to the nearest divisional point, where the train fortunately waited for 24 hours—long enough for a footsore traveller, left behind by the unusual spurt of speed, to trudge the 14 miles and rejoin his possessions.

March on the Saskatchewan prairies in 1906 was a cold and dreary month, and the weather further complicated the journey for the settlers. Somewhere north of the border, amidst a sea of snow drifts, the engine froze up. The train crew uncoupled it from the train and it disappeared up the track in a cloud of steam, without explanation. The settlers, cold and discouraged and weary with the tedious journey, waited impatiently for its return. Finally a delegation descended on the telegraph office at the nearest town and wired a protest to the divisional superintendent. Back came the reply—they were authorized to stop the first engine that came by, and commandeer it for their use. They waited doggedly, but before another train came by, a relief engine appeared from Moose Jaw, and the long train journey was resumed.

Shortly afterwards another delay was caused when the horses in one of the cars, wearied from the joggling and jostling of the long journey, crowded and slipped and went down in a tangle of legs and tie ropes. The train stopped at the next siding while the car was disengaged, to be left behind until the horses could be unloaded, fed and rested, before they continued their journey. The settler who shipped that car arrived at his destination several days behind the rest of the train.

It was the morning of March 16th when the train reached Rouleau, the end of the line for nearly half of the settlers. The spring was late and cold that year. Some of the settlers had houses to come to, and others lived in tents or in makeshift dwellings wherever they could find them. Several of the immigrants moved into a shack in the Diana district, with cracks in the walls that the wind whistled through, and an ancient cook stove for heat. The temperature dropped to 26 below zero before warm weather came. They huddled around the stove, one man sitting comfortably on the reservoir soaking up heat, while the front lids of the stove were red hot.

Later they lived in a tent pitched up against the end of a makeshift barn, disturbed in the night by the kicking of horses on the other side of the thin

partition. One of the settlers, lonesome for his wife and child and lost in the emptiness of the vast treeless plains around him, went around behind the barn in the spring twilight and wept for homesickness, wondering why he had left Iowa, while his younger cousin, unattached and seeing the land and the future through a rosy haze, looked on in amazement.

Another group crowded together, men, women and children, in a small shack throughout one endless blizzard Sunday. The children quarrelled and cried in protest against the cramped quarters and the boredom, while two pious elderly gentlemen in one corner, oblivious of the rest, droned pious tuneless hymns above the uproar.

The women arrived in tourist coaches, following their husbands for the most part, though, sometimes, train schedules being unpredictable, they passed the freight trains on the way and arrived before them. Carrying tiny babies, bird cages, shapeless bundles, toys and prized possessions of all descriptions, they occasioned curious stares and considerable amazement as they boarded the tourist cars in St. Paul. One family, coming to a homestead at Rouleau in 1902 in one of the colonist trains, included four generations ranging in age from an old man of 79 to a baby five weeks old.

Even after the settlers were established, the first year was not easy. One family brought 450 quarts of fruit from their Nebraska home, as well as barrels of cured meat and other provisions sufficient to last them for at least a year. Unused to Saskatchewan winters they dug their fruit cellar too shallow. Packed only two feet below the surface, the fruit froze and burst the jars.

The summer of 1902 was a dry one, with no rain until July. One woman recalls pouring wash water down a crack in the yard, and losing irretrievably one of the baby's stockings left in the water by mistake.

There are many tales of hardship recalled by the pioneers. The old man of 79 did not long survive his journey. The train was snow bound at Enderby, N.D., and a cold which he contracted then eventually proved fatal. It was for his burial that Rouleau cemetery was laid out. Many of the women who came up on the tourist cars found the country as lonely and distasteful as had their sisters who pioneered in covered wagons. Even by 1910 and 1911 roads were wandering. The scenery was empty and somehow rather terrifying, and the wind endless and frequently unbearable to eyes and ears accustomed to the wooded scenes of Iowa and Missouri.

Pioneering was still pioneering, in Saskatchewan during the first ten years of the century as it had been in the United States 50 years earlier. By covered wagon or by train, with assets or without, there is nothing easy about carving a home from an unbounded hunk of raw prairie lying bare in the chill March wind.

Louis Riel's Insanity Reconsidered¹

ON August 1, 1885, in the little brick courthouse that stood on the outskirts of Regina, Louis Riel was found guilty of high treason and sentenced to be hanged. Throughout the five dramatic days of trial, the six-man jury had been called upon to answer two vital questions; is Riel guilty, and, if guilty, was he sane when the treasonable acts were committed? In returning its verdict, the jury replied to both questions in the affirmative. Nevertheless, the historians of Western Canada have not always agreed with that verdict, or with each other, and by their disagreement have created the Enigma of Louis Riel. A doubt has been raised concerning the state of his mind during the course of the rebellion and it is to inquire into the reasonableness of that doubt that the following facts and conclusions are presented.

In considering the case of Louis Riel, it must not be forgotten that during the first twenty years of his life his mental outlook was conditioned by two prime factors—religion and his father's prominence as a leader of the half-breeds. From the beginning, religion was an integral part of his mental and emotional make-up, and, when in 1858 Madame Masson, of Terrebonne, arranged for his education in the Junior Seminary of Saint Sulpice, Montreal, there seemed to be no obstacle in the path of his aspiration towards the priesthood. However, on January 21, 1864, his father died at Saint Boniface and the mantle of leadership passed to his son. "I shall continue the work so nobly begun by my father," Riel said, "He was a benefactor to our people: I shall try to follow in his footsteps."² From that decision dated the conflict, between his political aspirations on the one hand and his religious leanings on the other, which gives such a strange cast to his behaviour during the last twenty years of his career. From 1864 to 1885, the compass of his life fluctuated, often with bewildering rapidity, from the political to the religious pole, and the tragedy of it was that he could not reconcile the two goals before the scaffold at Regina loomed above him.

The death of his father shocked him deeply and he began to absent himself from classes and to spend much time in brooding. "I saw that his profound grief affected his mind, which was manifested by the exaggeration of an eccentric religion; he threw himself into an excess of piety . . ." wrote John Lee, of Montreal.³ His mental state rapidly approached a crisis and he began to suffer under the delusion that he was not Louis Riel but a Jew, *David Mordecai*. He believed that

¹ *Editor's Note:* Most Canadian historians believe that by the beginning of the Rebellion of 1885 Louis Riel had become insane, and that his resort to arms was a result of this mental condition: see G. F. G. Stanley, *The Birth of Western Canada, A History of the Riel Rebellions* (London, 1936), pp. 314, 384, O. D. Skelton, *Life and Letters of Sir Wilfred Laurier* (Toronto, 1921), p. 326 footnote 1, D. G. Creighton, *Dominion of the North* (Boston, 1944), pp. 361-362, A. G. Morice, "The Roman Catholic Church West of the Great Lakes" in *Canada and Its Provinces* (Toronto, 1913), vol. 11, p. 171. A contrary opinion may be found in J. S. Willison, *Sir Wilfred Laurier and the Liberal Party*, Toronto, 1903), vol. 1, pp. 452-453. The author of this article, Mr. Frank Anderson, has made a close study of the life of Riel, and we believe that his opinions on this subject may be of interest to readers of *Saskatchewan History*.

² A. H. de Tremaudan, *Histoire de la Nation Metisse*, (Montreal, 1936), p. 163.

³ Letter of John Lee quoted in Mrs. H. Knox, "The Question of Riel's Insanity," unpublished paper read before the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, 1949, p. 2.

the true Riel had been drowned in the Missouri River. As David Mordecai, Riel's mission was to redeem the Jews and the Gentiles. He was a new Messiah and to aid in his work, he unsuccessfully attempted to borrow \$10,000 from a wealthy Montreal family to found a new church. This crisis passed quickly, however, and on June 19, 1866, he left for the West.⁴

The second major phase of Riel's career began on August 15, 1869, when he commenced his campaign to secure from the Canadian Government the guarantee that the ancient rights and customs of the Red River settlers would be safeguarded under the Dominion. The main outline of the Insurrection of 1869-1870 is too familiar to need repetition. It is sufficient to note that his behaviour during the troubles attendant thereon has never been brought under suspicion of insanity. There was for him no conflict between religion and politics and he worked in close harmony with the priests, with the exception of Bishop Taché, whom he did not fully trust. He devoted his talents to securing the political goals he had set.

The third and most controversial phase of his life covers the period from 1870 to 1878. Here again arises the conflict between his desire to lead his people politically and his ever-growing conviction that he was destined to play an important role in the establishment of a new church having its Pope in the New World. Following the collapse of his government on August 24, 1870, Louis Riel found himself gradually thrust from the political stage, and in proportion as he retired from the public arena he turned towards religion. Because of the intense feeling against him, aroused over the execution of Thomas Scott, he found public life denied him, even though thrice elected to the House of Commons from Provencher, and his private life was fraught with danger from the oft-repeated attempts to arrest or assassinate him. To escape his enemies he even sought refuge in a haystack from whence, heavily guarded by armed friends, he conducted his election campaign of October, 1873.⁵ His two attempts to take his rightful seat in Parliament were thwarted and in February, 1875, he found himself exiled for five years.

From October, 1873, until December, 1875, Louis Riel flitted wraith-like through an intricate labyrinth of hiding places, ever on the alert against his enemies and seldom tarrying long in any one sanctuary. He was torn between serving his people through the medium of the Church and in the political arena,⁶ but gradually it became apparent that he could not regain his former status as a leader in Manitoba until the furor over the execution of Scott had subsided. In consequence, he again turned to religion but his uncertainty as to whether he should enter the priesthood or remain a layman troubled him greatly.

⁴ Dr. C. K. Clarke, in his "A Critical Study of the Case of Louis Riel," *Queen's Quarterly*, Vol. 12, pp. 379-390 and Vol. 13, pp. 14-26, gives a greatly distorted account of this period of Riel's life. As an example, he declared that Riel persuaded his "feeble-minded old mother" to sell her farm and send him the proceeds! Madame Julie Riel was neither old, nor feeble-minded, nor did she ever sell the Riel farm.

⁵ M. A. Macleod, "Glimpses of Louis Riel," *Winnipeg Free Press*, July 13, 1935.

⁶ Letter of Louis Riel to Bishop Taché, dated Suncook, N.H., January 8, 1876; Archives of Archbishop of St. Boniface, Taché Papers.

By training, Riel had been shaped for the religious life and by nature he was attracted to the mystical aspects of it. He delighted to speak in parables and even his normal diet, mostly bread, honey, milk and cold meats was more ascetic than substantial. Further, he was one of those mortals pre-destined to leadership. Equipped with a magnetic personality, a brilliant mind and an overwhelming compulsion to be at the center of things, he could not enter upon any project without seizing the reins. When he abandoned politics for religion, he threw himself into it with all the vigour of his being. It is not surprising that through his combination of excessive piety and asceticism he had a vision while at Mount Vernon, near Washington, on December 18, 1874. He has recorded the nature of this vision as follows: "The same Spirit who came to Moses appeared to me in the same manner. I was stupefied. I was astonished. The voice said to me, 'Rise, Louis David Riel, you have a mission to perform.'"⁷ The mission was to establish a new church in America, with Bishop Bourget, of Montreal, as the Pope.

During the course of the following year, it appears definite that he was encouraged, with certain cautions, by his friends to believe that his mission was God-given,⁸ and while the inner workings of his mind cannot be laid bare, there can be little doubt that the moderating councils of his friends were gradually disregarded and his own role in the fulfillment of this mission magnified. "I had come to believe myself a prophet or something analogous," Riel himself wrote three years later.⁹ However, even this incentive was not sufficiently strong to cause him to completely abandon his political plans, for on October 28th of that year, he gained an audience with President Ulysses S. Grant, seeking an appointment in the Indian Department in order that he might work for his beloved Métis. The position was not granted to him and his disappointment may have had a direct bearing upon what followed.

On December 8th, 1875, while attending a service at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Washington, Riel exhibited the first signs of insanity. A hysterical laugh, which he vainly tried to smother with a handkerchief, burst from him and he was hurriedly removed to the home of a friend, Major Edmund Mallett. When his condition grew worse, he was taken to Suncook, N.H., to the home of Father Jean Baptiste Ritcher, where he had to be kept under constant guard. He began to suffer under the delusion that he was a bull, and he roared in the streets and through the garden of Ritcher's rectory. On December 31st, Father J.B. Primeau wrote to Major Mallett that Riel's role was finished.

When no improvement took place, it became necessary to have him interned and in February, 1876, his uncle, John Lee, took him back to St. Jean Baptiste, near Montreal. On March 6th he was decoyed into St. Jean-de-Dieu Asylum (Longue Pointe) and detained there by force. On the night of March 19th he completely destroyed the furnishings of his cell and was subdued only through

⁷ *Epitome of Parliamentary Documents in Connection with the North-West*, 1885. (Ottawa, 1886), p. 193.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 193. The Father Jean Baptiste Brune referred to is obviously Jean Baptiste Primeau, resident priest at Worcester, Mass., in 1874-1876.

⁹ D. Fremont, *Sur Le Ranch de Constantin-Weyer*, (Winnipeg, 1932), p. 133.

the combined efforts of three guards. On April 16th he again caused excessive damage and had to be constrained in the violently-insane ward.¹⁰

Nevertheless, Dr. F. X. Perrault, Superintendent of St. Jean-de-Dieu, later testified that: "A few days after the entrance of Louis Riel into this asylum I perceived that with him insanity was being simulated . . . Upon making the observation to him that I was not to be taken for his dupe, he confessed to me that in effect he was shamming the insanity."¹¹

On May 19, 1876, Riel was transferred to Beauport Asylum under the name of La Rochelle. Here he came under the care of Dr. J. S. Brunelle, who had known him well in the United States. Dr. Brunelle also declared that Riel was not insane, though he pretended to be. During his stay at Beauport, which lasted from May 19th, 1876 to January 23rd, 1878, Riel, frequently left his "asylum" to visit friends as far away as Suncook, N.H., and Three Rivers, Quebec.

In evaluating the statements made by Drs. Perrault and Brunelle, the question inevitably arises: why should Riel sham insanity? The only logical answer is that he was seeking a sanctuary from his enemies. However, he had successfully eluded them for six years and it is hardly plausible that it was necessary for him to cause a scene in St. Patrick's Cathedral, go roaring through the street of Suncook like a bull, and to smash the furniture at St. Jean-de-Dieu merely to conceal himself from his enemies. The evidence is plain. Louis Riel suffered from fits of insanity, beginning December 8th, 1875 and extending into the late summer of 1877, at which time he had regained sufficient control of himself to be permitted to leave the asylum for varying periods. On January 23rd, 1878, he was discharged. Riel records his own cure in these words: "Nevertheless, one day, tired of remonstrances and objections, I wondered if, in place of my being right and others wrong, they were right and I wrong. From that moment a light dawned in my mind."¹²

Riel remained in the East until January, 1879, when he returned to the West. In 1880, he led a small band of Métis into Montana Territory and settled with them at St. Peter's Jesuit Mission, near Sun River. He at once resumed his political leadership and continued to champion the cause of the Métis and Indians in Montana until June 10th, 1884, on which date he came to Saskatchewan with Gabriel Dumont, Moise Ouellette, James Isbister and Michel Dumas.

After nine fruitless months of political agitation in the Prince Albert area, Riel resorted to armed persuasion to secure the rights of the settlers and set up a Provisional Government at Batoche on March 19th, 1885. Hostilities unexpectedly broke out at Duck Lake a week later and continued through three more major engagements before the spirit of the movement was broken. Riel himself surrendered on May 15th, and was taken to Regina for trial.

¹⁰ Medical Files, St. Jean-de-Dieu Hospital, Montreal, No. 565, M.L.R. David (Louis Riel), courtesy of Superintendent Omar Noel.

¹¹ Speech of Hon. J. A. Chapleau, Secretary of State, March 24, 1886, *House of Commons Debates*, 1886, pp. 353-354. Chapleau cites the affidavits of Drs. Perrault and Brunelle in proving that the Government had not executed an insane man.

¹² D. Fremont, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

Scarcely had the rebellion been quelled, both in its Indian and half-breed phases, than another but more subtle struggle began. On one hand, Riel's friends commenced a campaign to mould public opinion to the belief that he was insane. They declared that from and after March 18th, he was no longer a responsible being. His enemies, fearful lest he thus evade what they considered justice for the execution of Thomas Scott in 1870 and the Rebellion of 1885, declared that he was sane. In the legal arena, the prosecution, having confidence in the overwhelming mass of evidence proving the treason charges, needed only to prove him sane in order to secure a conviction, while the defence, despairing of proving that the rebellion was justified, had recourse to the insanity plea as their *only* hope of saving Riel's life.

The evidence presented in the courtroom in proof, and disproof, of Riel's sanity is very unsatisfactory. The defence's second witness, Phillipe Garnot, Secretary of the Provisional Government, testified that Riel had set himself up as a Prophet, had created a new Pope and a new Church. Father Fourmond, resident priest at St. Laurent, declared: "We (priests at Batoche), in sum, arrived at the conclusion that his conduct can only be explained through madness."¹³ Father Fourmond must have arrived at this conclusion after the rebellion, for up until the last day of the battle for Batoche he held the opinion that Riel was merely a rebel and a heretic.¹⁴ Dr. Francois Roy (Superintendent of Beauport Asylum) and Dr. Daniel Clarke (Superintendent of the Toronto Lunatic Asylum) both gave as their *opinions* that Riel was insane in matters of religion, but their statements were not based upon any careful study of the man himself.¹⁵ The evidence of the Crown's medical witnesses suffered from the same fault. Dr. James Wallace had talked with Riel for only half an hour, while Dr. Augustus Jukes, senior N.W.M.P. medical officer, had never made a specific examination of his charge to determine if he held irrational ideas. Five laymen, including General Middleton, gave their opinion that he was sane. In sum, the medical evidence served only to confuse the issue.

Fortunately, we have access today to more evidence than did the six men of the jury. Riel's *Commonplace Book* and a number of his letters, written after his arrival in Canada, are now available. The *Commonplace Book* is essentially a diary of his dreams and theorizing. He records that the Spirit of God was constantly directing his thoughts and actions. There are, however, no insane ideas and no impractical theories set down therein. The phraseology employed is decidedly unusual, but the thoughts expressed, if due allowance is made for his love of parables, are rational and connected. Nevertheless, in turning to the collections of letters which he wrote, the observer is immediately made conscious that while those to his family are sane and in places beautiful, those to governing officials are filled with the repeated theme: "I am the Prophet of the New World."¹⁶

¹³ *Epitome of Parliamentary Documents in Connection with the North-West*. 1885 (Ottawa, 1886), pp. 151-155: evidence of Fourmond.

¹⁴ Letter of Father Fourmond to Archbishop Taché, dated Batoche, May 11, 1885. Archives of Archbishop of St. Boniface.

¹⁵ Dr. Daniel Clarke subsequently published an article in *The American Journal of Insanity*, Vol. 44, July, 1887, pp. 33-51, giving his views on Riel's condition.

¹⁶ N. F. Black, *History of Saskatchewan and the Old North-West* (Regina, 1913), pp. 375-378: letters of Riel to Judge Hugh Richardson.

The question of Riel's insanity in 1885 can only be answered by examining that oft-repeated statement: "I am the Prophet of the New World," for neither at the trial, nor in the evidence unearthed since, does there appear any other grounds for doubting his sanity. No other delusions have been noted, nor any acts of maniacal violence recorded. As a prophet, were the things he advocated irrational?

Riel believed that the Papacy should be removed to America and he had his Council declare Bishop Bourget, of Montreal, the new Pope. He challenged the infallibility of the Pope. He also declared that "God's mercy was too great to be sinned away by any person during the short time he had to live." He moved Sunday to the last day of the week, and he declared that religion consisted in trusting in God, keeping His Commandments faithfully and being prayerful and devout.¹⁷ These ideas of themselves are not irrational, but when expressed by a man professing to be a Prophet, they are lifted out of the world of reality and the sanity of their advocate comes into question.

The history of Riel's insanity consists of his reactions to the constant conflict between religion and politics. In 1864-1865, confronted with the choice of continuing his education in order to qualify himself for studies leading to the priesthood or of assuming his father's role of leadership, Louis Riel could not resolve the conflict and sought refuge from it in the delusion that he was a Jew, *David Mordecai*. In 1875, excluded from political life and not wishing to enter the priesthood, he fled again into an insanity which passed quickly from the stage of delusions to the more serious manic-depressive phase. In 1885, however, there was no conflict between religion and politics! The two were inseparable. Riel was both the spiritual and political leader of his people. Not only did they accept him as their Prophet, they also carried out his religious reforms, even to the extent of celebrating Sunday on Saturday. There can be no escaping the fact that Riel was considered as a saint and a Prophet by his people. Even Father Alexis Andre, his confessor at Regina, stated: "He is a Saint, this poor Riel. Just to see him is to believe that."¹⁸

Was Riel sane or insane, then, in 1885?

From the psychiatric viewpoint, Riel was mentally deranged when he declared himself to be a Prophet, even though the ideas expressed were not in themselves irrational. From the legal standpoint, it was sufficient to prove that, even though holding peculiar opinions, these opinions did not interfere with his judgment of what was right and what wrong. The Medical Commission appointed in November, 1885, arrived at this latter conclusion and adjudged him sane.¹⁹

¹⁷ A statement of Riel's religious beliefs may be gained by reading the Minutes of the Exovidat published in *Canada, Sessional Papers*, 1886, Paper No. 43h.

¹⁸ Father A. Andre to Archbishop Taché, dated Regina, November 20, 1885. Archives of Archbishop of St. Boniface.

¹⁹ *Editor's Note*: Dr. D. G. McKerracher, Director of Psychiatric Services of the Province of Saskatchewan, in a letter to the Editor points out that "it is not sufficient to establish mental illness to relieve a person from responsibility. It is necessary for the mental disorder to be sufficient to prevent a person from knowing the difference between right and wrong (using right and wrong in the legal rather than the moral sense), if he is to be found not guilty because of insanity."

Indeed, it is difficult to see how they could have decided otherwise. Several times in the course of the hostilities he had been called upon to make major decisions, and in every case the course he chose reflected both his sense of right and of humanity. From the historical viewpoint, considering the nature of those ideas and decisions which he rendered while under the impression that he was the Prophet of the New World, inspired by the Spirit of God, he can only be placed in that class of men who were the children of the conflict between the ideas they expressed and those held by the majority of their contemporaries.

FRANK W. ANDERSON

PLACE NAMES

Place Names in Royal Canadian and Mantario Municipalities

IN an earlier issue of *Saskatchewan History* it was suggested that some of our readers might undertake the compilation of a directory of place names origins for their districts. The accurate determination of place name origins in many instances depends upon the efforts of local historians, for many a name originated with the first settlers, and its source and significance must be sought in the traditions of the community. These traditions are often so scanty that this seemingly simple problem may baffle the most diligent investigator.

Mr. C. Evans Sargent of Eyre has assembled data on most of the place names in the rural municipalities of Royal Canadian (No. 261) and Mantario (No. 262) and we are pleased to present below the results of his research.¹

L. H. T.

CASTLE COMBE (P.O. 1913.) Suggested by William Rowles, a farmer in the district, after the village in England which was his former home.

CONNELL'S CORNER (P.O. 1918). Named after William Connell, owner of the farm on which the post office was situated and postmaster for many years.

CRAIGLANDS (S.D. No. 745, 1912). Named after Charles E. Craig, postmaster and owner of the farm on which was located an early post office of the same name.

CUTHBERT (Hamlet). Named after Cuthbert Harnett, youngest son of an Ontario family who were pioneer settlers in the vicinity.

EYRE (P.O. 1914; S.D. No. 3782, 1916). Suggested by J. J. Daly, storekeeper and postmaster, and owner of the land on which the store and post office were located. Probably named after Lake Eyre in Australia, near Daly's former home.

EATONIA (Village 1920). According to local tradition the original name of the station, "Eaton," was in honor of the famous mail order catalogue sometimes known as the "Homesteader's Bible." Confusion with the neighbouring Eston led to the changing of the name to Eatonia in 1921.

LAPORTE (P.O. 1914). South of what is now Laporte was the farm of the Martin Land Company, which purchased a large tract of C.N.R. lands. Here it operated with power machinery and demonstrated the results to prospective purchasers. Most of the employees were from Laporte, Indiana, and it was so named for this reason.

¹ The dates appearing in the list have been inserted by the Editor, and are the dates of establishment of the school district (S.D.), post office (P.O.), rural municipality (R.M.) or village.

LLOYD GEORGE (S.D. No. 3670, 1916). Suggested by James W. Hawtin, Sr., after the Prime Minister of Great Britain.

MANTARIO (R.M. No. 262, 1911; P.O. 1912; Village 1923; S.D. No. 4511, 1923). The neighbouring Alsask having been named after the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, the inhabitants agreed to name the locality after the provinces of Manitoba and Ontario.

MAYFIELD (S.D. No. 3104, 1913). Suggested by Zachariah Leach after his daughter May, who was the first person buried in the neighboring cemetery.

PINKHAM (P.O. 1911; S.D. No. 416, 1911). Named after Mr. Pinkham one of the first settlers in the district.

ROSS MOIR (S.D. No. 4357, 1920). Suggested by S. G. Suddaby in memory of Ross Moir, a local farmer who was killed while serving in the Canadian Army in World War I.

ROYAL CANADIAN (R.M. No. 261, 1912). Royal Canadian was one of seven names submitted in the petition for the organization of the rural municipality by the committee composed of Angus McDonald, W. C. Hodgins, Neil McLean, Chas. Bailey and R. Leeks. Supposed to reflect the local interest in combined names as shown by the neighbouring Alsask and Mantario.

The Newspaper Scrapbook

THE first meeting of the Senate of the University of Saskatchewan was held at Emmanuel College on the 3rd inst. His Lordship the Bishop of Saskatchewan, Chancellor, presiding. The Hon. D. H. Macdowall, member of the N.W.C., and the Rev. W. R. Flett, B.A., of Sidney College, Cambridge, were elected members of the Senate. The Rev. W. R. Flett, B.A., F.C.S., was appointed Vice-Chancellor. A board of studies was nominated to draw up a scheme of subjects for the various examinations. The scheme to be presented for confirmation at a meeting to be held at Emmanuel College on the 29th of December. Mr. W. V. MacIse was unanimously elected Registrar.

The Prince Albert Times and Saskatchewan Review, December 5, 1884.

ARRANGEMENTS have been made for holding a grand shooting match in this vicinity on Tuesday, 21st inst. Those interested are requested to attend Dewan's Club Rooms on the evening previous, at 7 o'clock sharp. The following are the points to be allowed for the different kinds of game:

For buffalo, bear, wolf, fox, moose, deer, elk, antelope, lynx, wolverine, and Rocky Mountain sheep—10 to 20.

Beaver, ermine, otter, mink, badger, porcupine, rabbit, squirrel, gopher, skunk—30 to 50.

Prairie chicken, partridge, whiskey-jack, magpie, crow, ravens, swift, woodpecker, owl—1 to 10.

Territory to be hunted to be within a radius of twelve miles of Battleford. The losing side to pay for a supper for all.

Saskatchewan Herald (Battleford), December 20, 1880.

THE excursion from the city of Toronto to this town, arrived here on Saturday evening last, August 11th, at 6.15 p.m., under the escort of J. R. Neff, Esq., M.L.A., who had proceeded to meet the excursionists at Port Arthur, in the interests of the Moosomin Agricultural Society, and also to represent this town and district. This step was indeed a wise one, and one whose results surpassed the most sanguinary expectations. It was computed that close upon 300 visitors were on board the train, one hundred of whom got off here, the remainder going on to Regina and Moose Jaw, accompanied by one of the managing committee, Mr. O. Neff, and returning here on Monday night. Superintendent Tait of this division, was also on board. It is to be regretted, however, that the train did not arrive as early as was anticipated, as nearly one hundred and fifty vehicles had been prepared to drive the visitors into the country. Nevertheless, on Tuesday, those who remained behind were driven around to some farms in the neighborhood. They were delighted with the North-West and said that they never saw such healthy and vigorous crops. Great interest was also taken in harvest operations.

—*Moosomin Courier*, August 16, 1888.

THE Moosomin Fox Hound Club met at the Queen's Hotel yesterday, when Mr. Cleverly provided an excellent breakfast. After the pack had run a few miles they succeeded in finding six jack rabbits and two foxes; also a wolf, this latter giving them a run of about forty minutes.

—*The Moosomin Journal*, April 21, 1892.

DR. W. L. Bain, of Wolseley, has been appointed a Coroner in and for the North-West Territories, by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor. The Dr. also has the credit of being the first to register as a medical practitioner, under the ordinance just passed by the N.W.C., providing for such registration.

—*Qu'Appelle Progress*, February 5, 1886.

MISS Angus having arrived, the Kindergarten class will open today. Parents having children from 3 to 7 years of age should take advantage of this great opportunity provided by our School Board. Young ladies wishing to take a course in training will also be received who may apply to the Secretary, Mr. Steele. Children between the ages of 5 and 7 may attend each forenoon, and those between 3½ and 5, in the afternoon. Miss Angus is a graduate of the Ottawa Normal School, and is qualified to train teachers as well as to teach thoroughly the Kindergarten method of child culture.

—*The Standard* (Regina), January 15, 1892.

SOME idea of the progress which is being made in travel and the rapidity with which the North-West is becoming developed may be gained from the fact that Mr. Macdowell and Mr. Clark left Prince Albert on Monday at 11 o'clock, A.M., and supped Saturday in Winnipeg. The sleighing between Prince Albert and Qu'Appelle is reported first-rate.

The Regina Leader, April 12, 1883.

WE understand that in a few weeks, or as soon as it can be fitted up, Mr. W. G. Williams, watchmaker, intends opening up a first-class photographic gallery, with every convenience for taking a good photo. He will also take a great interest in view photography, as it seems to be a greatly felt want among settlers to get a picture of their homesteads to send to friends "far away." We wish him success.

—*Moosomin Courier*, March 19, 1885.

WE are pleased to be able to inform our readers that the flouring mills recently erected on the banks of the Qu'Appelle River, full particulars of which will be published shortly, are now completed and in running order. Steam was got up last Friday, and the welcome sound of the whistle was made to echo from hill to hill much to the consternation of the unsophisticated native. Farmers can now bring in their grists and be served in a short time. Success to the Qu'Appelle Valley Flour Mills.

—*The Qu'Appelle Vidette* (Fort Qu'Appelle), October 9, 1884.

Book Reviews

THE MEN OF THE MOUNTED. By *Nora Kelly*. Toronto, Vancouver: J. M. Dent and Sons (Canada) Ltd., 1949. Pp. 398, illus. \$5.75.

IN this book Mrs. Kelly gives a straightforward and uncomplicated version of the history of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police which is intended for the general reader. By recounting notable cases drawn from official records she succeeds in bringing out the qualities which make the Force outstanding. Much of her book covers familiar ground but that part which brings the story up to date is particularly interesting and useful.

Mrs. Kelly based her narrative on official reports, articles in the *R.C.M.P. Quarterly*, and works on the subject by previous writers. She divides her material into three parts. In the first section she traces the development of the North-West Mounted Police from its beginnings in 1873 to 1904. This includes the well-known story of maintaining order among traders and Indians, of policing the construction line of the C.P.R., of service during the rebellion of 1885 and the Yukon gold rush, of establishing police authority in the sub-arctic and arctic areas. In the second part of her book Mrs. Kelly deals with the period from 1904 to 1920. Here she describes hazardous patrols in the arctic by Pelletier, Fitzgerald, French, Caulkin, and others. She tells also of routine work on the prairies and gives a brief account of the part played by the Mounted Police during the Winnipeg strike of 1919. The third and largest section of the book is devoted to a survey of activities from the re-organization of the Force in 1920 to its 75th anniversary in 1948. The duties of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were greatly increased to include all federal police work in Canada and this made necessary an expansion of the Force and important changes in organization. New methods of crime detection were developed and the Marine and Aviation Sections were strengthened. War conditions further increased the responsibilities of the Force, as might be expected. This third of Mrs. Kelly's book is mainly factual but many case histories have been worked into the narrative to add a note of excitement. There is much of interest in chapters describing the efficient work of police dogs, the historic voyages of the schooner *St. Roch* through the North West Passage, and the recent youth programmes organized by the "Mounties." Many readers will like a review of the spy investigation which was set in train by the Gouzenko statement. At times Mrs. Kelly's appreciation of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police verges on hero worship, but, for the most part, she lets the facts speak for themselves. The book is provided with numerous photographs and good maps.

KENT D. OLIVER

THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY IN CANADA. By *W. L. Morton*. Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1950. Pp. xiii, 331. \$4.75.

IN the general election of 1921, the New National Policy of the Progressive party clashed head-on with the old National Policy under which Canada had been governed since the 1880's. On the prairies and in rural Ontario, the result was clear cut. The New National Policy won. The party that sponsored it sent

65 members to the House of Commons and for the next five years exercised a shadowy balance of power between Liberals and Conservatives. Then the party disappeared.

What made the Progressive party and what happened to it is the theme of this book by Professor W. L. Morton of the University of Manitoba. The book is the first in a series sponsored by the Canadian Social Science Research Council tracing the origins and development of the Social Credit movement in Alberta. Morton's book fits into the series as background for understanding the political climate in which Social Credit germinated. But it is very much more than that. It is a thorough-going analysis of one manifestation of western agrarian revolt. The book stands by itself independently of the series as a first rate contribution to Canadian history.

Summing up his story of the western party, Professor Morton writes:

The Progressive movement was a revolt against a concept of the nature of Canadian economic policy and of Canadian political practice. The concept of Canadian economic policy which the Progressives had formed and on which they acted was that of a metropolitan economy designed, by the control of tariffs, railways, and credit, to draw wealth from the hinterlands and the countryside into the commercial and industrial centres of central Canada. The concept of Canadian political practice which the Progressives had formed and on which they acted was that the classic national parties were the instruments used by the commercial, industrial and financial interests of metropolitan Canada to implement the National Policy of tariff protection and railway construction by dividing the vote of the electorate on "political" issues and by compromises and majority decisions of the legislative caucus.

The story of western economic grievances is all too familiar. Indeed, the West is still hammering away at the proposition that we have been the "hewers of wood and drawers of water" for the more favoured sections of the nation. We have only to turn for confirmation to the representations by the Prairie provinces to the Royal Commission on Transportation last year. This fact is a measure of the success which the Progressives achieved in the one phase of their struggle. As Morton notes, "On the whole, the Progressive movement left the metropolitan economy of central Canada unaltered in substance or spirit."

The Progressives were generally agreed among themselves that the traditional parties of Canadian politics were evil because they were the instruments of commercial, industrial and financial exploitation. The Progressives differed sharply among themselves about the means by which the basic character of the parties was to be changed. And in this disagreement lay the seed of the movement's disintegration. I hope I do not distort the author's argument when I state the disagreement briefly this way: the Manitoba Progressives wanted to reform the Liberal party by driving out its protectionist, big business element and making it a coalition of truly liberal elements from all parts of Canada; the Alberta Progressives wanted to destroy the party system itself.

This conflict ran through the whole history of the movement. It was reflected in the personalities and careers of T. A. Crerar and Robert Forke on one side

and Henry Wise Wood of Alberta and J. J. Morrison of Ontario on the other. Both Wood and Morrison preached a doctrine of class-consciousness which neither Crerar nor Forke could accept. They looked to the solution of economic and political problems through the functioning of group government. The elected member would be a delegate from his group and not a representative of all the people. Much of this philosophy in Wood's case was derived from the practice of government by "blocs" in the United States. It simply would not fit in with the parliamentary pattern of Canadian politics.

But it gave the Progressive member of the House of Commons an independence and freedom from caucus decisions quite unknown to other political groups before or since. And because the Progressives were free, and because a section of them refused to accept the responsibility of sustaining a government, the end of the movement was hastened. It could not stand up to the difficulties of holding the balance of power in a parliamentary system. Some of its representatives went back to the ways of parliamentary government and once more threw in their lots with the parties they had left to become Progressives. The Alberta Progressives continued to cling to its belief in group government until the 1930's. By then political events convinced them that group representation was not enough. They sought, in the original design of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, affiliation with other groups (notably labor) in bringing about a new orientation of Canadian politics. It is not without interest that they carried with them to the C.C.F. their strong feelings of class consciousness.

This is bald summary of the view Professor Morton presents of the rise and fall of the Progressive movement. It is a wholly tenable and logical view. It takes into account a wide variety of circumstances attending the Progressive movement. Professor Morton argues his case persuasively and has it backed up with an abundance of fact. He writes with great skill so that the book is exceptionally readable. Professor Morton in *The Progressive Party in Canada* has made a first-rate contribution to the history of Canada.

ALEX. R. CAMERON

PIGS—FROM CAVE TO CORN BELT. By Charles Wayland Towns and Edward Norris Wentworth. Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1950. Pp. xiii, 305, illus. \$5.00

Pigs—*From Cave to Corn Belt*—is an extremely interesting narrative which deals with the evolution of swine in America, and traces the hog from its introduction to the Western Hemisphere by Columbus and its subsequent transfer from Cuba to the southern part of the North American continent. Here it subsisted for some decades in a state of nature until American agriculture developed, whereupon it spread with permanent settlement to the Corn Belt, and became under domestication "the mortgage lifter" and the raw material for the great American meat packing industry.

The authors state in their opening chapter that "this volume undertakes to portray the American scion of the Suidae family, noting his place in mythology,

religion, magic and entertainment—and according him his rightful place in the American scene, rural and urban.” This they do with great skill. Canadians of this generation may be forgetful of the fact that the great interior of the United States developed slowly until the advent of the steam locomotive and the building of transcontinental railways. Prior to that development, the limitations of distance delayed the expansion of the Corn Belt and restricted the production of hogs. Nevertheless there was a development of hog raising in the hinterland of settlement near enough to the populated centres to be marketable on foot through the agency of drovers.

The authors describe the evolution of marketing methods and growth of new centres of influence in the meat packing industry as agriculture expanded westward and refrigeration was developed. They show the marvellous improvement in handling methods and the wide expansion of the trade in pork and other products of the swine industry in war and in peace. *Pigs—From Cave to Corn Belt* may be described as a story of American agriculture with pigs as the central theme. It begins with hogs running wild in the beech forests, and ends with the Corn Belt farms and their enormous output of wholesome meat from improved animals bred by millions of farmers. In the words of the authors:

From haphazard employment as a hustling gleaner of forest bounty the hog was promoted to the honoured function of marketing the biggest portion of the American corn crop. The most significant claim which United States stockmen can make as creative breeders is based on the development of the lard hog.

In this achievement they have been greatly served by scientists employed on experiment stations and in the public service of the nation.

F. H. AULD

BLOOD RED THE SUN. By *William Bleasdel Cameron*. With a Foreword by Owen Wister. Calgary: Kenway Publishing Co., 1950. Pp. xiii, 225, illus. \$2.50

THIS book is a reprint of *The War Trail of Big Bear* and includes some new and hitherto unpublished material. This is the story of Chief Big Bear's band that, during the uprising of 1885, attacked and killed all the white men at Frog Lake except the author (then in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company post in the settlement) whom they took prisoner and held in captivity for two months.

This book is a sympathetic report of Cameron's experiences with the disturbed and half savage band of Crees. No doubt his former relations with the Cree bands and his trading operations saved his life.

In a foreword to the book, Owen Wister states, "The Indian in his fashion struck for his own, as the white man has often struck in his fashion." An impartial view of the revolt is gathered from the accusation of the untutored and savage

war chief, Wandering Spirit, who, in explaining the reason for the uprising to Cameron, said:

You are one of them, the big Company. You trade with the Crees for furs and write everything down in a book—you know. The Company sold this land to the Big Chief Woman and took money for it . . . This land belongs to us. The Company did not own it. They are rich because they got much money for something that was not theirs. We are not rich. We are poor. Often we do not have enough to eat. So we have taken back the land and when it is sold again—to the Long Knives (Americans)—the money will come to us, not to the Company.

The buffalo, the chief source of food of the Indians of the plains, had disappeared and the Indians were hungry; moreover, the tribes who had formerly roamed the prairies at will resented being shut up on reservations. They longed for the old wild free life—free from restraint.

One of the dramatic incidents was the action of William Mackay, a Hudson's Bay Company officer who averted a general massacre by "pacing evenly up and down between two rows of levelled rifles"—Major Crozier's men and the enraged Indians—when the Mounted Police officer attempted to arrest an offending member of Big Bear's band in the camp of Chief Poundmaker. Mackay, whom the Indians called Little Bearskin, (a family name given to the Mackays who had been officers of the Hudson's Bay Company for generations), was a fearless man who held the respect of the troubled Indians. He commanded the "wanted" man to surrender and when the Indian did so, Mackay turned to Crozier and said "Arrest your man!" Standing thus, between the law and the young war-incited Indians, Mackay was in danger of losing his life when an older Indian shouted, "Would you kill a Little Bearskin?" Only Mackay's great personal authority and bravery averted the complete massacre of the Mounted Police officers.

It was the intention of Wandering Spirit, the war chief, to massacre all the inhabitants of Fort Pitt, but due to the influence of Cameron and others, Chief Big Bear—before the proposed attack—was persuaded to send a note to the commanding officer which read:

Sergeant Martin, N.W.M.P.

My dear friend,

Since I first met you long ago, we have always been good friends. That is the reason why I want to speak kindly to you. Please get off from Fort Pitt as soon as you can. Tell your captain that I remember him well, for since the Canadian Government has had me starve in this country he sometimes gave me food. I do not forget, the last time I visited Fort Pitt he gave me a good blanket. This is the reason that I want you all out without any bloodshed . . . try and get away before the afternoon, as the young men are wild and hard to keep in hand.

All through the book, scarcity of food, hunger of the people and the confiscation of their territory is put forward by the Indians as the cause of their revolt. This is a book that should not be allowed to go out of print as it is a first hand and valuable account of a troubled time in our western history.

MARY WEEKES

Notes and Correspondence

A QUESTIONNAIRE entitled "What Did Western Canadian Pioneers Eat?" is being currently circulated to Homemakers' Clubs and to subscribers of *Saskatchewan History*, as a means of bringing it to the attention of those with a knowledge of pioneer times. The questionnaire embraces a variety of aspects connected with the preparation of meals in early days. Among its questions are those about the foods of everyday consumption, foods resorted to in times of emergency and shortage, and the menu for the first Christmas dinner in Western Canada, as well as questions concerning changes in wrappings and containers, utensils, and in fuels used and methods of cooking. Information obtained from those answering the questionnaire will be used in the preparation of an article on the diet of pioneers to be written by a member of the Faculty of the College of Household Science at the University of Saskatchewan, and will be published in a forthcoming issue of *Saskatchewan History*. The completed questionnaires will be preserved in the Archives Office, University of Saskatchewan. The recollections of early settlers are requested and welcomed, and any who would care to contribute information on this subject may obtain a questionnaire upon request from:

Saskatchewan Archives Office,
Box 100,
University of Saskatchewan,
Saskatoon, Sask.

Several articles on local history written by the Rev. P. Chrysostom, O.S.B., were published during July and August in the *Naicam Progress* and the *Lac Vert Leader*. They deal with the early days of St. Peter's Colony, Mt. Carmel and the origin of a number of place names in north-eastern Saskatchewan.

Among the recent correspondence in the Editor's files is a letter from the Rev. J. W. Whillans of Vancouver, B.C. Mr. Whillans enjoys the distinction of having conducted what is believed to be the first service broadcast from a church in the British Commonwealth. This service was in Carmichael Presbyterian Church, Regina, at 7 P.M. on February 11th, 1923, and was carried by radio station CKCK, Regina.

The November 16th issue of the *Leader-Post* contains an illustrated article by Mr. Paul Groome describing the history of Regina's electric light system, which commenced operations on November 15, 1890.

Contributors

SHIRLEY I. PAUSTIAN, M.A., is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan and is on the staff of the Regina *Leader-Post*.

DR. F. H. AULD, Chancellor of the University of Saskatchewan, was Deputy Minister of Agriculture for the Province of Saskatchewan from 1916 to 1946.

MARY WEEKES, Regina writer, is the author of *Round the Council Fires*, *The Last Buffalo Hunter*, *Painted Arrows*, *Great Chiefs and Mighty Hunters*, *Trader King*, and has contributed to numerous journals and magazines.

ALEX. R. CAMERON is a member of the editorial staff of the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* and is a member of the Editorial Committee of *Saskatchewan History*.

Editorial Note:

The editorial committee will welcome comments on this issue and suggestions for the future. Articles and illustrations suitable for publication are desired, but contributors should consult the editor before submitting material.

NOTICE

Many of the articles which appear in *Saskatchewan History* are based on documents in the Office of the Saskatchewan Archives, University of Saskatchewan, and in the archives collection relating to Regina and district which is maintained in the Legislative Library. The Provincial Archivist is anxious to augment both these collections with letters, diaries, reminiscences, photographs, and records of all types of organizations and businesses. Readers of this magazine are urged to communicate with the Provincial Archivist if they possess or know the whereabouts of materials which may be donated, or borrowed for microfilming.

